

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING h.b. 6337

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My name is William Wilkin. I live in Oxford CT and have held a PV-2 license for 2 years, and worked in the solar electric field for almost 4 years. Just last month I formed a new solar electric installation company with a partner who has been an E-2 for 25 years, including several years intensive experience in solar electric work. I aim to earn my PV-1 license in the next 1-2 years so I can be the contractor and obtain our permits. Meanwhile we have retained an E-1 who I met when I was his student at Industrial Management and Training Institute (IMTI) in Waterbury, CT.

I worked hard to earn my PV-2 license and I'm very proud of it. It shows my dedication to learning all aspects of solar electric technology and installations. I did not get into solar in order to do electrical work. I did complete 732 classroom hours and all the Electrical technician curriculum at IMTI so that I could dedicate myself to a solar career. That's the full E-2 classroom curriculum. In addition, I have read several books on photovoltaics and taken many on-line courses on photovoltaic technical issues.

The E-2 (or E-1) is like an M.D.: you can't possibly really know every disease you're licensed to treat, nor can you practically be familiar with every possible electrical application you are licensed to work. So my PV-license, though "lower" (more limited) than the E-license, actually shows more specialized knowledge and experience in the exact field in which I work. This is actually safer for me and the customer than if the work were done by someone not specializing, for example, in the DC circuits over 400 volts that we have studied and work with as daily fare.

One other idea I think is important about the PV-2 and PV-1 licenses: if it's not actually enough to do the whole job, then why get it at all? I worked hard for my PV-2, and intend to earn the PV-1, so that my career (and new business) can specialize in photovoltaics. We will be very good at our specialization, we intend to be the best in the business. Meanwhile our new company employs an E-1 for permits but he is learning solar from us. Of course we all are always learning from each other, but our E-1 knows less about solar than my partner and I. The PV-license will be worthless if the job actually requires an E-license after all. The PV-license will thus be abandoned as part of the career paths of solar workers, and solar installations will be more likely to be done either by workers with no license at all or by those with E-licenses but less actual understanding and experience with solar circuits.

The solution I offer is to study all aspects of a PV installation and be sure all aspects (for example, grid-connection) are thoroughly studied and apprenticed in the PV-2 apprenticeship program. Thank you for your attention.

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